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# **What Are The Security Implications Of The Expansion Of The European Union To Include The Visegrad Nations?**

**A Monograph  
by**

**Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Rollo  
British Army**



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Lieutenant Colonel William Rollo

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Approved by:

Terry L. Tucker Monograph Director  
COL Terry L. Tucker, MS

Gregory Fontenot Director, School of  
COL Gregory Fontenot, MA, MMAS Advanced Military  
Studies

Philip J. Brookes Director, Graduate  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Degree Program

Accepted this 6th day of May 1994

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## ABSTRACT

### **WHAT ARE THE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXPANSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO INCLUDE THE VISEGRAD NATIONS?**

By Lt Col W R Rollo, British Army, 47 pages.

The Visegrad nations of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary became associate members of the European Union in 1991. Some or all may achieve full membership by 2000. Membership of the European Union will carry with it a security guarantee, whether explicit or implicit. This monograph assesses the security implications of such a guarantee.

The monograph first examines the nature of the guarantee. It then analyzes the security implications of giving such a guarantee within two broad areas of concern: those associated with the internal stability and ethnic disputes of the Visegrad nations, and those linked with Russia. In assessing Russian capability two scenarios are developed. The first assumes that Belarussia and the Ukraine remain independent. The second that they are reintegrated in the Russian Federation.

Western military capability is then correlated with Russian, focusing on the problems of ground force deployment and force structure posed by a requirement to deploy into Eastern Europe. Areas of capability which will need to be improved if the Visegrad nations are to be successfully included within a collective defense system are identified, and recommendations made as to how this might be done.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1991 all four Visegrad nations (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary) became associate members of the European Community (since October 1993 the European Union (EU)). All have applied for and hope to achieve full membership by 2000. On current performance at least three (Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) are likely to succeed. Their inclusion into the EU will be particularly significant for several reasons. All the Visegrad nations were formerly part of the Soviet Union's Eastern European 'empire', and are still regarded by many in Russia as within her sphere of influence. Their integration into the West will test Russia's acceptance of her loss of empire, and will occur at a time when the outcome of Russia's reform process may still be uncertain, and when it may indeed fail. Russia's reaction is critical because membership of the EU will carry with it a security guarantee, whether explicit or implicit. The aim of this paper is to examine the form and implications of such a guarantee, and to make recommendations on the action required to render it effective.

The paper contains six sections. The first assesses three options within which a security guarantee might be given to the Visegrad nations: an implicit guarantee through membership of the EU; an explicit guarantee through membership of the Western European Union (WEU), as the defense 'pillar' of the EU; or full membership of NATO. The second section discusses the security implications of giving a guarantee to the Visegrad nations within two broad areas of concern: those associated with their internal stability and the ethnic disputes of their internal and external minorities, and those linked with Russia. It suggests that the majority of the ethnic problems should be capable of resolution through political action. It then turns to Russia's foreign policy, assessing the extent to which it will be affected by the success or failure of the reform movement, and examining the effect of Western policy in defining Russian courses of action. The paper argues that an effective military balance of power is necessary if stability in East and Central Europe is to be achieved.

The paper's third section assesses Russia's future military capability within two scenarios: one in which the Ukraine continues as an independent state, and one in which the Ukraine is reabsorbed into Russia. The paper assumes that the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) and Open Skies Treaties remain extant, and that the Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) contained in the Vienna Document of 1991 continue to be applied. The fourth section investigates future Western capabilities and correlates them with Russian, while the fifth focuses on the problem of ground force deployment and force structure in Eastern Europe. Finally, the sixth section identifies areas of capability which will need to be improved if the Visegrad nations are to be successfully integrated into a collective defense system, and makes recommendations as to how this might be done.

#### OPTIONS FOR A SECURITY GUARANTEE

There are three broad options within which a security guarantee might be extended to the Visegrad nations as they join the EU. The first would be implicit in membership of the EU. The second would include full membership of the WEU, and the third, full membership of NATO. Each will be examined in turn.

It is theoretically possible for a country to accede to the EU without any formal change to its security status. Although the Maastricht Treaty gave all existing members of the EU the right to accede to its defence 'pillar', it did not explicitly state that new members would have the right to automatic membership. However, it is the EU's stated aim to 'define and implement a common foreign and security policy', leading to 'the eventual framing of a common defence policy'<sup>1</sup>, in the context of political and economic moves towards greater union. For the EU to include new members while purposefully denying them participation in security matters would be inconsistent with this policy. Moreover, if 'union' has any significance at all it must include arrangements for collective defence. It appears unlikely that other members of the EU would stand by and watch while a fellow member was threatened or physically invaded by an external state.

Membership of the EU in itself will therefore carry an implicit guarantee of aid in the event of attack by a third party.

A second option would provide for full membership of the WEU on accession to the EU. The advantages of this option are that it carries, in Article 5 of the Brussels Treaty, a formal statement on collective defence which is in some ways stronger than that of NATO,<sup>2</sup> while lessening Russian anxiety over the expansion of NATO to her borders. Its disadvantages are principally military and relate to the fundamental credibility of the guarantee. The WEU has at present only a tiny planning staff, no other integrated military staff or organization, no doctrine and no forces permanently assigned. To the extent that it has operated effectively at all it has done so through the common sense of the participants and the procedures developed over years in NATO. Far more important, it is composed of only ten of the current twelve members of the EU, and does not include the USA. If the WEU were to unilaterally extend a security guarantee to the Visegrad states, the USA might be placed in the position of having to choose between denying aid to the WEU, and becoming involved in a crisis in Eastern Europe late in a crisis and against her will.<sup>3</sup>

The third option would be for the Visegrad nations, as they wish to do, to join both the WEU and NATO on accession to the EU, so avoiding divergent membership of NATO and the WEU. They would then be covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, while the US would be centrally involved from the beginning of any crisis. While apparently more satisfactory, it is unlikely that this process will be made explicit. Neither the US nor the members of the EU would welcome open recognition of a formal linkage, in which the US would have an effective veto, between the expansion of the EU and the expansion of NATO.<sup>4</sup>

The whole subject of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is to be reviewed at the EU Intergovernmental Conference in 1996, in advance of the review date of the Brussels Treaty in 1998. However, whatever the formal linkage, it is the first option



which is probably most significant. When the Visegrad nations become members of the EU they effectively become part of the West. They will be entitled to assistance from their partners, and will in turn be expected to conduct their internal and external affairs prudently and in good faith.

### VISEGRAD SECURITY ISSUES

#### THE INTERNAL STABILITY OF THE VISEGRAD NATIONS

There is considerable Western concern that Central and Eastern Europe contain a series of ethnic conflicts 'waiting to happen'. Those who hold this view regard the societies concerned as inherently unstable, and see ethnic conflict as inevitable. They believe that a collective defence arrangement is irrelevant to the solution of these problems, and often link this argument to the damaging effect that such an arrangement would have on the progress of Russian reform, itself perceived to be the most secure foundation for European security. Each of these assertions will be questioned below.

A society's stability may be measured in a number of ways. Politically, it should be able to change its government peacefully and democratically. Socially, there should be a broad consensus on the society's nature and direction. Economically, its aspirations should match reality. It should conduct its internal debates in terms of economic policy rather than nationality, and its external disputes through diplomatic means rather than megaphones. In Samuel Huntington's phrase, the debate should be about 'Which side are you on', rather than 'What are you'.<sup>5</sup>

An analysis of the Visegrad nations against these measures produces varying results. Poland has held three sets of elections since 1989, all peaceful. In the most recent a left wing coalition came to power under a revised constitution designed to limit the fragmentation of parties, which had contributed to the weakness of the previous two governments. Significantly, it has continued the economic policies and reforms of its predecessors, and differs only in the emphasis now placed on softening the social impact of the reforms. The economy has grown by 4% in the last year, with a similar forecast for

1994. Unemployment has fallen to 13% (only just above the European average), inflation to a still-alarming 30% (from a disastrous 586% in 1990), the budget deficit is under control, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is in the process of relieving 50% of the external debt. Poland has no significant internal minorities. There is a small Polish population in Lithuania, with whom Poland has negotiated an agreement on minority rights. Inflation apart, this is not a portrait of an inherently unstable society.<sup>6</sup>

The Czech Republic presents a similar picture. Separation from Slovakia has had short term economic costs but seems likely to have long term benefits. The separation was accomplished peacefully, and the new Czech Republic contains the most productive sections of the economy and a more homogenous population. The 1992 general election returned a centrist coalition, whose leader, Klaus, is reported to be 'securely placed in a dominant position within the coalition government...(whose) position is buttressed by continuing popularity and its image as the main force behind the political and economic changes of recent years.'<sup>7</sup> After the sharp drop in output (and living standards) which accompanied price liberalization, the economy is expected to have grown by 0.5% in 1993, and by 3% in 1994. Inflation is forecast to halve to 10% in 1994, while the budget deficit remains controlled, and the current account is in surplus due to a healthy tourist trade. Unemployment, at 3.5%, is remarkably low, accounted for by tourism and, perhaps, by the slow pace of structural reform.<sup>8</sup> Internal minorities total only 5 % of the population, including 3% Slovaks. The only significant external population of Czechs is in Slovakia. Again, while progress may be fragile, there are no signs of inherent instability.

Hungary is a more ambiguous case. Although there seems little prospect of a serious threat to the democratic process, with further elections due in mid-94, the economy has yet to recover and there are signs of considerable political and social stress. The government has been weakened by the prolonged illness and subsequent death of the Prime Minister, Jozsef Antall, and by the steady defection of right wing nationalist members of parliament from the coalition. The economy shrank by 1% in 1993, and is not

expected to produce significant growth until 1996. Although both inflation (18% in 1993, down from 23% in the previous year) and unemployment (12.9% in 1993) appear to have peaked, the collapse of exports in 1993 and the difficulty of restructuring a large and previously heavily subsidized agricultural sector point to further difficulties ahead. The budget deficit exceeded IMF guidelines in 1992, leading to a suspension of IMF facilities, and may do so again in 1994.<sup>9</sup>

The effect of these economic difficulties has been to add to the significant potential for nationalist and ethnic politics provided by Hungary's external minorities. Internally, Hungary is relatively homogenous, with small numbers of Germans, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats and Romanians in addition to a significant gypsy population, together totalling 900,000 within a total population of 10.34 million. Externally, nearly 2 million Hungarians live in Romania, 600,000 in Slovakia, 400,000 in the Vojvodina in Serbia, and an undetermined number in the Ukraine. The majority of the Hungarians live in areas adjacent to Hungary itself, and which have previously formed part of Hungary, although the situation in Transylvania in Romania is more complex.<sup>10</sup>

The Hungarian government has made a number of political and diplomatic moves which could be interpreted as threatening to review existing borders if extensive minority rights are not granted to Hungarians, to the alarm of the states concerned. As Slovakia, Romania, and Serbia all have disastrous economies it is, perhaps, not surprising that their governments have 'played the nationalist card' in response. In Romania, the Hungarian minority has been described as a 'fifth column' and Hungarian policy compared to that of Hitler. In Slovakia, the Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar, has described 'a greater Hungary as a bigger threat to European security than a greater Serbia'. The Hungarian government's response has been restrained, and it has succeeded in negotiating an agreement to exchange data on troop movements and observers with Slovakia. However, perhaps more important has been the growth of support for the nationalist factions within the Hungarian parliament. Hungary does not yet fit the pessimists' model, but it clearly

needs a significant improvement to its economy. While internally free from ethnic conflict, its external minorities make it vulnerable to entanglement in the difficulties of other societies.

Slovakia has had the most difficulty in managing the transition from communist rule. The present government is unrepresentative of the considerable number of citizens who did not favor separation from the Czechs, and has been criticized for increasing authoritarianism. It has attempted to mitigate the high economic and social costs of both the original transition from a state economy, and separation from the Czech Republic, by maintaining high social expenditure payments. The large budget deficits which resulted have prevented IMF assistance. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 7% in 1993 and is forecast to fall by a further 2% in 1994. Although inflation is still, at 25%, comparable with its neighbors, unemployment is 15% and expected to rise. The Slovakian government has also excited nationalist sentiment against Hungary, and has discriminated against both the Hungarian minority of 10% of the population and the gypsies, who could constitute as much as a further 10%. A treaty with Russia in August 1993, which allowed for military cooperation, is difficult to reconcile with the government's continued insistence on joining the EU at the same time as its neighbors. <sup>11</sup>

A superficial overview of the four countries would therefore suggest that both Poland and the Czech Republic are relatively stable societies with good prospects, provided their economies continue to develop; that Hungary is vulnerable to instability through economic weakness and the presence of large external minorities in neighboring countries in far worse condition than her own; and that Slovakia comes uncomfortably close to fitting the pessimists' model. However, there are further factors which need to be taken into account before dismissing any country as unsuitable for membership of an alliance.

First, there is a clear link between relative economic development and ethnically driven political instability. Economic progress in both Hungary and Slovakia would take

considerable heat out of the political debate. Second, the behavior of governments can be influenced favorably by economic and political pressure from the EU and USA. The Conference on Stability in Europe, due to open in Paris in the spring of 1994, aims specifically to address minority rights and border revision. Given that the central external policy aim of both countries is to join the EU as the only viable path to economic prosperity, the EU should have considerable leverage when demanding effective minority rights within any country which wishes its membership application to be considered seriously. Third, while there is little evidence that a collective defence organization is successful in preventing conflict between its members, the case of Turkey and Greece suggests that membership of an alliance allows additional pressures to be brought to bear on the protagonists which limit the extent of the conflict. In summary, the risks of ethnic conflict can be overstated, are open to preventative action, and do not constitute an overwhelming argument against the inclusion of the Visegrad nations within a collective defense agreement.

#### RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

The second category of security issues concerns the effect of a collective defense agreement on Russia and the Ukraine. It has been argued that Eastern Europe has been within Russia's sphere of influence for 250 years, and that Russians of all political persuasions will view any collective defence organization on their borders as aggressive, thus harming the reformist cause. A variation of this view states that the collective defence of East and Central Europe, by the West, would also be incredible, as there is no real commonality of interest between them and no true common threat.<sup>12</sup> Underlying these arguments is the assumption that Europe's security is best served by a democratic Russia with a successful market economy, with whom a cooperative rather than adversarial relationship should be developed. This assumption, and consequently the arguments for which it forms a basis, is worthy of qualification.

If the argument is taken on its own terms, it is 'natural' for Russia to have a sphere of interest which includes Eastern and Central Europe. However, the dramatic shifts of political allegiance and economic ties which accompanied Gorbachev's disavowal of the Brezhnev doctrine and the withdrawal of Soviet forces do not support this statement. All the Visegrad countries now have democratic governments, and all aspire to join both the EU and NATO. Under free market conditions all now have over 50% of their trade with the West, at the expense of their trade with the former Eastern bloc. It is not clear under what conditions it is 'natural' for Russia to have a sphere of interest which includes countries which have clearly repudiated her leadership, and with whom she does not, with the exception of the Kaliningrad enclave, even share a common border. The historical argument used to buttress this assertion is even less credible. Three of the four countries concerned (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary), lay deep within first the Austrian, and then the Austro-Hungarian Empires, and can in no sense be seen as within a Russian sphere of influence. Only Poland, repeatedly divided between Prussia, Austria, and Russia since 1793, might fit such a category, were her repeated revolts in the 19th Century and instant reappearance under self-determination in 1919 to be ignored.

If the argument of 'naturalness' is discounted, there remains that of 'realpolitik': that regardless of the wishes and apparent interests of the countries concerned, it is in everybody's long term interest to have a satisfied and democratic Russia. This version of the argument assumes that the nature of the Russian state, and therefore its foreign policy, will be fundamentally different, and from the West's perspective, 'better', under a democratic government than any alternative. However, it is not clear that a Russian 'democratic' state will necessarily be democratic in a recognizably Western way, and that it will therefore share common Western values. Nor is it clear that a democratic government will take a different view of Russia's interests than a more authoritarian version.

The new Russian Constitution, the creation of Mr. Yeltsin, has been described as 'neo-conservative', with 'an emphasis on strong presidential rule'. 'It will strive to create a

unitary rather than a federal state, in which the demands of the constituent parts for a degree of local autonomy will be crushed. Economic reform will continue only in so far as its supporters can convince the president that it will strengthen the state'.<sup>13</sup> The President's free market reformers, including the prime minister and finance minister, have been replaced by conservatives with a commitment to cushioning market forces and state subsidy which will make successful economic progress more difficult. Interpretations of these developments will vary from encouragement at the survival of Mr. Yeltsin, to dismay at the prospect of further economic decline. However, it seems undeniable that Russia's economy will place great strains on both its political system and society for some time. If the Russian state is to survive, it seems likely to develop a strongly authoritarian nature. Moreover, if the link between economic difficulty and extremist nationalism is accepted, this, too, may become a theme in Russian domestic and foreign politics.

In Russia's case extremist nationalism is not now, nor has it been historically, a purely domestic matter. Russia has genuine, and perfectly legitimate, concerns over the fate of its 25 million citizens in the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. However, concern can be expressed in various ways. The current Russian version asserts, according to the liberal foreign minister, Mr. Kozyrev, that 'a complete withdrawal of Russian troops from other former Soviet republics was an extremist idea' and that 'Although military domination is not in Moscow's interests, it would be dangerous to create a vacuum because it might be filled by unfriendly forces'<sup>14</sup>. His comments appear to apply to all former parts of the Soviet Union, including Latvia and Estonia, and to disregard any requirement to obtain the consent of the new republics. While Russian policy has undoubtedly become more aggressive in the last few months, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the combination of a legitimate interest in the fate of Russians in the 'Near-Abroad' with nationalist politics will result in a foreign policy with which the West will find little ideological common ground.

If Russian policy regards a vacuum as a space to be filled lest unfriendly powers occupy it, even under the comparatively benevolent rule of Mr. Yeltsin, it seems reasonable to question whether withholding membership of a collective defense organization from the Eastern Europeans, in order to prevent a more extremist government gaining power in Russia, is a worthwhile exercise. Even a democratic Russia appears likely to need to assert itself, and to do so to the limits of its power. The implications for Western policy are then straightforward. Unless it wishes to see a resumption of a strong Russian influence, and perhaps even presence, in countries with whom economic and political union is ultimately planned, no vacuum should be allowed to develop. However, any security guarantee offered to the Eastern Europeans has to be credible and not merely a form of words. Credibility will depend, ultimately, on the perceived correlation of forces and the relative military capabilities of Russia and the West.

#### RUSSIAN MILITARY CAPABILITY

An assessment of Russia's military capability in five years time is, inevitably, highly speculative. In the absence of firm data it would seem reasonable to start with Russia's current military doctrine, as a statement of the capabilities which she would like to possess, and then to assess her nuclear and conventional capabilities within two broad scenarios. In the first, the Ukraine survives as an independent state, whose *raison d'etre* will make her inimical to Russian neo-imperialism. In the second, the Ukraine has been re-absorbed into Russia. In each case it is assumed that the CFE and Open Skies Treaties and the CSCE CSBMs remain in force.

#### RUSSIAN MILITARY DOCTRINE

The 1993 Russian Military Doctrine, which equates to US National Security Strategy, revealed significant changes to that of 1990. The 1990 doctrine reflected the fundamental tenet of defensive sufficiency imposed by Mr. Gorbachev. The main wartime objective was to repel aggression, the main developmental goal to structure forces to repel



aggression. Nuclear war was regarded as certain to be catastrophic for all mankind and to assume a global character. Conventional sufficiency meant that the Russian army could not conduct large scale offensive operations. Strategy was to be defensive. Preemptive strikes were not to be used.<sup>15</sup> In 1993, the main wartime objective became to repel aggression and defeat the opponent, the main developmental goal to optimize force structure for all possible wars and combat operations. Nuclear war might be catastrophic for all mankind. Reference to its global nature was deleted, perhaps indicating that the Russians might be considering 'limited nuclear warfighting' as a possibility. Conventional 'sufficiency' now meant that large scale offensive operations could be conducted without additional deployment - offensive forces were allowed. References to a defensive strategy were deleted, and the new doctrine referred to 'all forms of military action', the conduct of offense and defense equally, and to seizing the strategic initiative to destroy an opponent.

In addition to the general change from 'defensive sufficiency' two specific areas of the doctrine are worth noting. The section on 'Main Existing and Potential Sources of Military Threat outside the Russian Federation' includes 'the suppression of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states' and 'expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the interests of military security of the Russian Federation'. The doctrine's next section, entitled 'Factors which facilitate the escalation of military danger into a direct military threat to the Russian Federation' includes the 'deployment of foreign troops on the territory of states adjacent to the Russian Federation'.<sup>16</sup>

These changes need to be seen in context. In 1990, the USSR was still in existence, with large forces deployed in Eastern Europe. There was no foreseeable scenario which required offensive action. In 1993, Russia faced a situation in which, from its perspective, it might have to take or threaten offensive action to ensure the security of its populations in the new republics. Moreover, its strategic position had changed drastically, with the 'loss' of Eastern Europe, Belarus, and the Ukraine. Nevertheless, the

Doctrine betrays both a driving sense of insecurity at Russia's new geopolitical situation, and a determination to prevent it deteriorating further by limiting the security policy options of her neighbors. The essential points, from a Western perspective, are that Russian Doctrine is no longer purely defensive, and that Russia shows a potentially dangerous wish to dominate her neighbors.

#### RUSSIAN CAPABILITY WITHOUT BELARUS AND THE UKRAINE

Fortunately, given the changes to Russia's Military Doctrine, her neighbors do not currently include any of the Visegrad countries, with the exception of Poland through the Kaliningrad enclave. Russia is bordered to her West by the Baltic states, Belarus, and the Ukraine. However, there is substantial evidence to suggest that Belarus's independence is increasingly tenuous. It has not displayed any fervent separatism, has re-integrated its economy with that of Russia, rejoined the rouble zone, and signed the Tashkent Treaty on military cooperation<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless, Belarus retains at least a nominal independence. The Ukraine is a different matter.

Russia has been at worst hostile, at best ambivalent to the Ukraine's independence. Western policy towards the Ukraine has been uncertain, and has focused more on its possession of nuclear weapons than its survival as an independent state. The arrangement to remove the nuclear weapons, brokered by Mr. Clinton in January 1994, may have settled the nuclear issue, although it will take seven years to complete, but the Ukraine's future remains in doubt. Its economy is declining in parallel with Russia's, but at a significantly faster rate. It contains 10.7 million Russians, in addition to its 42 million Ukrainians, great natural resources, and has, for three hundred years genuinely not only been part of Russia's sphere of influence, but of Russia herself. Its future should be of tremendous importance to the West. If the Ukraine survives as a nation of 52 million people between Russia and Central Europe, determined to assert its independence, opportunities for Russian neo-imperialism may be limited. If it fails to survive, Russia's borders will again directly adjoin those of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as

Romania. Moreover, the manner of the Ukraine's passing may send a clear message. It may collapse quietly and be reabsorbed comparatively painlessly into Russia, or it may equally degenerate to the point where Russia intervenes to 'protect its citizens'. The result might be either a rump state or, perhaps more likely, the reintegration into Russia of the whole country, accompanied by the suppression of Ukrainian nationalism.

From a strategic perspective the continued existence, or otherwise, of the Ukraine is of fundamental importance for several reasons. While the Ukraine exists Belarus may continue a nominally independent existence, with the presence of Russian troops limited to Kaliningrad. Together, Belarus and the Ukraine limit Russian access to the Visegrad nations, lessening the opportunity for friction to occur, and reducing the potential for military force to be used to gain leverage in any dispute. Were a dispute to occur between Poland and Belarus, or Poland and Russia over Kaliningrad, any Russian deployment would be constrained to Belarus, and would have to take account of the potential of the Ukraine to threaten direct action, or to permit the use of its territory or airspace by Western forces.

Equally important, an independent Ukraine has a significant effect on potential force levels. Under the agreement by which the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU) divided up the USSR's allocation of forces under the CFE Treaty, the Ukraine is permitted a maximum of 450,000 troops, 4080 tanks, 5050 Armored Combat Vehicles (ACVs), 4040 artillery pieces, 330 Attack Helicopters (AH) and 1090 combat aircraft. Russia, excluding Belarus, is limited, west of the Urals, to 1.45 million men, 6400 tanks, 11480 ACVs, 6415 artillery pieces, 890 AH and 3450 combat aircraft. While the Ukraine remains independent, this allocation has a doubly beneficial effect. It directly denies to Russia approximately 25% of her potential manpower, 40% of her tanks, and 30% of her ACVs, artillery, AH and combat aircraft. Indirectly, it forces Russian planners to take Ukrainian forces into account; Russia's available force levels, already diminished by the need to commit troops to Caucasia, are further reduced.

Without the Ukraine, Russia's conventional capability to coerce Poland is extremely limited. It could hold naval or air manoeuvres over the Baltic, using Kaliningrad as a base, but any large scale deployment of ground forces would be restricted by CFE zone restrictions and CSBMs. Belarus's manpower limit is only 100,000 men, with equipment levels either comparable or inferior to Poland's. Any substantial reinforcement of Belarus would break either or both of the treaties. In terms of the implications of offering a security guarantee to the Visegrad nations, Russia should not present a significant military threat so long as the Ukraine remains independent and the CFE Treaty holds.

#### **RUSSIAN CAPABILITY IF BELARUS AND THE UKRAINE ARE REINTEGRATED INTO RUSSIA**

The situation would change if the Ukraine were to be reabsorbed into Russia (or if her independence were to be so circumscribed that her armed forces became effectively part of Russia's), and if Belarus also became either de facto or de iure part of Russia. Russia would then have contiguous borders with three of the Visegrad nations - Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Total Russian forces within the CFE area could increase by 25% in manpower and 40% in tanks. Forces would no longer have to be allocated to contain the Ukraine, and substantial forces could be deployed along her Western border, without breaching CFE. Her strategic situation, and her position to coerce the Visegrad nations, would have improved substantially. The potential correlation of forces between a 'Greater' Russia and the Visegrad nations is shown below, at Fig 1, using CFE Treaty limits both to define force level parameters and as the only firm figures available.

**Figure 1.**

	<b>Manpower</b>	<b>Tanks</b>	<b>ACVs</b>	<b>Arty</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>Chl A/C</b>
<b>Russia</b>						
Russian Military Districts (MDs)	1,450,000	6,400	11,480	6,415	890	3,450
Belarus	100,000	1,800	2,600	1,615	80	260
Ukraine	450,000	4,080	5,050	4,040	330	1,090
Sub-total	550,000	5,880	7,650	5,655	410	1,350
Total	2,000,000	12,280	19,130	12,070	1,300	4,800
<b>Visegrad</b>						
Poland	234,000	1,730	2,150	1,610	130	460
Czech Republic	93,333	957	1,367	767	50	230
Slovakia	46,667	478	683	383	25	115
Hungary	100,000	835	1,700	810	108	80
Total	474,000	4,000	5,900	3,570	313	885
<b>Force Ratios</b>						
Russian MDs vs Visegrad	3.05	1.6	1.94	1.79	2.84	3.89
Belarus, Ukraine vs Visegrad	1.16	1.47	1.30	1.58	1.31	1.53
Greater Russia vs Visegrad	4.22	3.07	3.24	3.38	4.15	5.42

Several factors are worth noting. First, the CFE Treaty and CSBMs remains useful in limiting the potential capability of Russia to deploy massed combat power aggressively. Restraints apply at several levels. If Russia's intent is purely to threaten, then only the forces available in the CFE zone which includes Belarus and the Ukraine can be used. Other Russian forces may not, under CFE, be deployed forward from their present locations. The forces deployed in Belarus and the Ukraine are comparatively large, but only a fraction of that which Russia might deploy were she to be fully mobilized and unrestrained.

Second, Russian military capability in the next five years will be determined as much by the state of her economy as by her Military Doctrine and General Staff estimates of her needs. In 1993, Russia alone, without Belarus and the Ukraine, could theoretically

muster 44 active and 40 reserve divisions within a total peacetime strength of 1.34 million for the army.<sup>18</sup> In practise this army exists largely on paper. Although large supplies of equipment exist, infrastructure, maintenance, training, and manning are all totally inadequate. Ground force OPTEMPO, in the small number of units with sufficient strength to train, is approximately 15% of US rates, while Air Force flying hours equate to 20% of the US rate. What resources are available are being channelled into pay and housing.<sup>19</sup>

Current Russian plans call for the Army to be redesigned around a nucleus of forward-deployed forces; Immediate Reaction Forces (IRF), largely airborne; and a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) of several corps-sized combined arms formations, together with substantial fixed and rotary wing air forces.<sup>20</sup> The strength of the Armed Forces in 2000 will be 1.5 million, with 50% of the total long service professionals, although General Grachev has recently referred to a higher total of 1.9 million.<sup>21</sup> The creation of such a modern, high technology force in Russia will pose enormous problems to the General Staff. The government is unlikely to be able to provide the required financial resources, the defence industry is crumbling and ill-suited to providing the complex C4I and precision weapons necessary, and the Russian people's willingness to support conscription is questionable. However, Russia's ability to regenerate military strength has been underestimated before.

Options for future Russian conventional military capability from 2000 onward should therefore range from close to zero, if the economy does not revive, to a force of approximately 2 million, including the Belarus and Ukraine, with a comparatively well-trained nucleus of up to 30 division equivalents<sup>22</sup> forward deployed, or held back in the IRF and RDF. Since a security guarantee from the West to the Visegrad nations would extend into the future beyond 2000 it might be prudent to take the latter figure as a measure against which to measure current Western capability.

### WESTERN MILITARY CAPABILITY

If the maximum offensive force available to Russia is 30 divisions, it should be possible to calculate the size of force required to defend against it. However, this task is complicated by several factors. The role of nuclear weapons is uncertain, as is the effectiveness of strategic air power against a nuclear power with strategic delivery systems. Without strategic attacks on enemy C2 and air defence, air superiority may take longer to attain, diminishing the effect of Western tactical air forces on the ground battle. The relevance of traditional force ratios in a scenario of low absolute force levels is open to question, particularly given Poland's long border with a 'Greater Russia' that included both Belarus and the Ukraine, and recent and continuing changes in technology. The extent and implications of increased warning time vis-a-vis force generation will also require examination, as will the role of the force multipliers associated with operating within an alliance as opposed to a coalition, and the effect of long lines of communications.

### THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND STRATEGIC AIR ATTACK

Western concepts for regional war now regard nuclear weapons as 'weapons of last resort'.<sup>23</sup> However, they do envisage a conventional strategic air attack whose effectiveness, with modern precision weapon systems, could be similar to a nuclear attack, as demonstrated in Iraq in 1991. It could be argued that such a capability alone would provide an adequate conventional deterrent against any Russian attempt to use military force to coerce one or more of the Visegrad nations.

Russia, by contrast, has clearly stated a number of circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used. The 1993 Military Doctrine makes no pronouncements on renouncing first use. Moreover, it states that Russia might use nuclear weapons against a state which does not itself possess them, but which was allied to a nuclear state and was engaged in armed aggression against Russia or her allies.<sup>24</sup> Other statements by senior Russian figures have suggested that a decapitating strike of the sort carried out against

Iraq in the opening hours of Operation DESERT STORM would be considered to equate to the use of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>25</sup> Such a strike would invite nuclear retaliation as the only means available to protect the state against certain defeat.

Mr. Zhirinovsky apart, it is not, therefore, inconceivable to foresee Russia threatening the use of nuclear weapons in the context of a crisis involving one or more of the Visegrad nations. The straightforward nuclear coercion of a Visegrad nation appears extremely unlikely. However, if the West were to threaten to intervene, nuclear strikes might be threatened more credibly in at least two scenarios. First, German intervention could be inhibited by a threat to remove the crossings over the Oder-Neisse river line using nuclear weapons. Second, a Western attempt to strike Russian command and air defence systems might invite a public threat to respond with nuclear weapons against Western airfields (probably those of a non-nuclear power). It is not clear that extended deterrence by either the West European nuclear powers or the US would be automatically activated in such a case. It would not be clear to a Russian either, which is perhaps the best argument against it occurring. However, two further conclusions are possible.

The first is that a solid security guarantee within a firm collective defence agreement would be more likely to be convincing than vague promises to consult - or even, as provided for under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to take the matter immediately to the Security Council. The second is that the role of strategic air power would have to be most carefully considered, and that deterrence through the threat of incapacitating air attack may not be an option. The Western alliance was able to conduct a limited war on its own terms against Iraq. This may not be possible against a nuclear power.

#### THE USE OF WESTERN TACTICAL AIR POWER

If neither nuclear weapons nor strategic air attack pose a certain deterrent to Russian attack, the Gulf War suggested that Western tactical air power could have a devastating effect on ground forces. However, a number of factors might affect its potential in this case. First, achieving air superiority would be likely to be a considerably



greater task for the Western forces than it was in Iraq. Assuming that a pre-emptive strike would not be not an option, Russia would have the initiative and would be unlikely to be taken by surprise. Indeed, planning should take account of the possibility of Russia herself obtaining either operational or tactical surprise. Second, the threat of nuclear retaliation would make any attack aimed at the complete incapacitation of the Russian C4I and AD systems a difficult option. It might be possible to remove overtly some systems, while leaving others, for instance nuclear command channels, intact. However, the flexibility of modern communications systems and the uncertainty of the Russian reaction might limit such possibilities. Third, Russia has a far larger air force, distributed in much greater depth, than Iraq's. Fourth, Russian aircraft are superior to those of the Iraqis, and their crews better trained and more aggressive. Finally, the effectiveness of Western aircraft would be affected by the distance from their Main Operating Bases (MOBs), the availability of Forward Operating Bases(FOBs) in the Visegrad nations, the ability to support these logistically, and the degree to which air defence and other systems are effectively coordinated. Without immediate air superiority the availability of aircraft for Air Interdiction and Offensive Air Support would be substantially reduced, and it would appear unlikely that tactical air power alone would suffice to deter a determined ground offensive.

#### WESTERN GROUND FORCES

There remains the capability of Visegrad and Western ground forces. The correlation of forces between those forces theoretically available in Western Russia and the Visegrad nations was shown at Fig 1. However, although the potential force ratios look comparatively innocuous, the frontages concerned, in particular for Poland, make a simple first order analysis of this kind unreliable. Traditional measures of defensive sufficiency on NATO's central front assumed a requirement of approximately one division to every thirty kilometers of front, with the requirement for operational reserves increasing

this to 1.5 divisions. On a frontage of six hundred kilometers this yielded a NATO requirement for some thirty divisions.<sup>26</sup>

The combined frontage of the Visegrad nations with Russia, allowing for some straightening of the line, is approximately 1100 kilometers, of which 900 are in Poland. A reasonable assumption might be that Slovakia and Hungary would have the capability to defend 100 kilometers each, but that they would be reluctant or lack the ability to deploy outside their own borders. A similar conclusion, in the absence of an effective collective defense agreement, might apply to the Czech Republic. If, more doubtfully, it were assumed that Russia would divert at most two divisions to mask them, the Polish position becomes uncomfortable.

Traditional calculations might require a force of up to forty five divisions to defend such a frontage. Poland's total forces, even when fully mobilized, amount to only eleven divisions, who might be faced by twenty eight to thirty Russian. Even if it is assumed that Poland mobilized successfully against a Russian attempt to coerce her, and managed to concentrate on her Eastern border - neither necessarily safe assumptions - the Russian superiority would be such that she would be vulnerable to coercion without Western aid.

Several conclusions may be drawn. First, Poland would not be able to defend herself, without reinforcement, against a Russian attack. Second, the scale and timing of Western reinforcement, at current force levels, would be hopelessly inadequate. First line forces in Germany now include only the bulk of two US divisions, one UK division, two German divisions, and the Multinational Airmobile Division (MNAD). The French could additionally produce a further airmobile division and perhaps an armored division at comparatively short notice. Second line forces amount to one Dutch, six German, and perhaps two French armored or mechanized divisions, and a mixed British division. A US Corps of five first line divisions might deploy within thirty days. A total of six to eight first

line divisions might therefore be immediately available, with ten second line and five first line divisions available in thirty days.

The ability of any of these Western forces to deploy over 400 kilometers forward to the Russo-Polish border and to support themselves when there, yet alone fight in a high intensity conflict, must be considered doubtful. If deployed forward in a crisis, their move could be presented as escalatory and could precipitate an attack. The ability of Western forces to survive if caught mid-move, without settled command arrangements, with inadequate logistics, and without necessarily even air superiority, would be doubtful. It is more likely that they would not be committed in such circumstances and would instead deploy on Germany's eastern border.

Western Forces should then be capable of holding the short 300 kilometer Oder-Neisse line against a Russian advance that would already be logistically stretched, would have suffered attrition in overrunning Poland, and would probably have already attained its objectives. It is theoretically possible that the West might then counter attack. However, in the absence of a coordinated defence it is more probable that Poland's resistance would be quickly overcome, and that the combination of the rapid appearance of Russian troops on the borders, in conjunction with nuclear threats if the West should intervene, would paralyze effective Western response.

A number of options might exist to increase the capability of Western ground forces. The West could re-adopt Forward Defence, reconstituting its armored forces, increasing their readiness and deploying elements forward in Poland. It could adopt a policy of non-linear defence which emphasized mobile operations, or, at the other extreme, it could suggest to the Visegrad nations that they adopt a version of 'defensive defense' of the kind proposed in Germany in the 1980s.

## CONVENTIONAL WESTERN RESPONSES TO EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUND DEFENCE

### FORWARD DEFENCE

If the aim of Western policy were to be able to establish a forward defence on the Russo-Polish border a number of problems would arise. Conventional calculations of frontage might require a total force of up to forty five divisions to be confident of holding a positional defence over a front of 900 kilometers against a fully mobilized Russian force. As CFE equipment limits prevent the Poles from equipping more than eleven, the remaining Western powers would have to produce thirty five (as against the twenty three of which they are currently capable). This is theoretically possible, given a return to Cold War levels of defense spending (the British then provided two further divisions, the Germans four, the French two, the Dutch two, the Belgians two and the US three, a total of fifteen extra). Such an expansion could be accomplished within CFE. However, a return to the levels of funding required would seem highly unlikely, both politically and financially, unless Russia were to rearm on a much greater scale than envisaged here.

A serious problem would remain over mobilization, readiness and deployment. It seems unlikely that the Poles would be willing to countenance German troops stationed in Poland in peacetime, given their residual fears of German pressure to revise their borders, quite apart from any Russian reaction. With the possible exceptions of the professional forces of the USA and Britain, it is doubtful if any of the other Western European powers would be willing to deploy forces forward. If they were willing to forward base elements of their divisions, and even their equipment, their mobilization and deployment would still be extremely difficult. If the troops were not forward deployed the West would be in a better position than at present, but would still face essentially the same dilemma. If they mobilized early they would face accusations of escalation and the risk of defeat in detail. If they mobilized late they might face a *fait accompli*. This problem is not susceptible to small scale solutions. If the Russians were able to maintain their force of thirty first line

divisions at a high state of readiness, and were prepared to mass when required, they should be able to defeat a force of at least equal size distributed along Poland's border. A linear defensive strategy, even with a larger force, therefore allows only two options with any hope of success - complete deployment prior to hostilities, or counter attack after the event. The former is inherently unlikely. The latter might be militarily feasible, but its political acceptability, in the face of Russian nuclear intimidation, appears doubtful.

### MOBILE DEFENCE IN DEPTH

If the Polish border were merely screened by light forces the bulk of the Polish Army could be held back, perhaps to cover the shorter Vistula-San line, behind which decisive fire and manoeuvre could take place with Western forces initially barely forward of the German border. The West would still require a much larger ground force, but would have a much greater chance of success provided that several assumptions were made. First, that Western forces would be able to synergize operational fires and maneuver more successfully than their Russian counterparts. While Western technology might still be superior this would require a considerable degree of training and integration amongst Western forces, including those of the Visegrad nations. The coordination of the deep battle was not easy even for the comparatively homogenous force deployed in the Gulf. Amidst the chaos which might be expected to accompany a Russian attack the precise interaction between intelligence agencies, weapons systems and targeting agencies required would be difficult to achieve. Moreover, to equip, man and train the number of first rate formations required would be exceedingly costly - so much so that the West might not be willing to pay it.

### DEFENSIVE DEFENCE

A further solution which might meet some of these difficulties lies in the concept of 'defensive defence', sometimes put forward as an answer to the problem of defending West Germany. The concept has taken various forms. A radical version required the breakdown of the majority of the German army into anti-tank teams of approximately

platoon strength, stationed in their own areas, who would conduct guerilla warfare against advancing Soviet tank armies. A less romantic version envisioned a large number of territorial infantry divisions using prepared defences, with a depth of up to 150 kilometers, to inflict attrition on Soviet armored forces, who would then be defeated by a comparatively small number of NATO armored divisions held back behind the belt. The plan had some appealing features. The lack of mobility, and of mobile firepower, of the infantry divisions was held to contribute to stability by making it clear that NATO had no aggressive notions. It was politically attractive in Germany as it satisfied the strong left wing and pacifist sentiment prevalent in the 1970s, and it appeared to offer an effective defence which was cheap in equipment and training terms and which might also allow a decrease in the length of military service. However, it never managed to satisfy its critics, who argued that, even in heavily populated West Germany, the proposed density of the infantry forces would be insufficient to cause adequate attrition on concentrated armor. The Soviets would mass on narrow axes, overwhelm any unfortunate platoons of territorials brave or foolish enough to get in their way, and push on to the Rhine. The infantry forces would lack the mobility to redeploy, and the armored forces would be too weak.

If the concept were applied to Poland its viability is similarly open to question. Poland has a smaller population distributed over a much greater depth and similar width. Its population density is 121 persons per square kilometer, compared with 215 in West Germany.<sup>27</sup> Most of the countryside is also flat and open, with limited cover - far less suitable than the urbanized and hilly country of much of West Germany. In order to create the depth required to give the concept even a chance of success the Polish army would have to be mobilized, and then deployed to the Eastern side of the country. To be remotely viable the defended zone would probably have to be based on the Vistula, but then the majority of its defenders would be unfamiliar with the ground and would not be defending their own homes in the way envisioned by the scheme's creators.

However, it might offer the chance to make effective use of the Polish army's trained reserves, whom CFE Treaty limits will not allow to be equipped in fully mechanized formations. Its success would depend on timing. The covering force would have to give it time to mobilize and deploy, and Western forces would have to deploy promptly in order to provide the reserves required to destroy Russian penetrations in depth. If interpreted in this way the concept would be vulnerable to any Russian attempt to paralyze the Polish state by simultaneous attacks in depth, along the lines of both Operation JUST CAUSE, and, in a less sophisticated variant, the Blitzkrieg attack of 1939 in which Russo-German forces overran the Polish army before it could mobilize and deploy. It would also be ineffective against any Russian attempt to seize only a limited area of the country forward of the zone to be defended. An area where it might be more effective would be the hill country of Slovakia, where any Russian attempt to move across the grain of the country to outflank forces deployed in southern Poland might be seriously inhibited by effective popular resistance - if the political will existed.

#### THE REQUIREMENT FOR GROUND FORCES

It would appear that the West requires a force with very high firepower to manpower ratios, able to be maintained at a high state of readiness, with very high operational mobility. It should be capable of both covering a wide frontage and concentrating rapidly to hit an enemy who has massed, while moving and operating well dispersed to avoid presenting a target to the enemy's deep strike forces or weapons of mass destruction. Such a force should give the West the capability to intervene rapidly without previous mobilization, and at the same time maximize the West's advantages in technology and training. Moreover, it should allow all the nations of the alliance to contribute in a way that probably would be politically acceptable - with small numbers of men at risk and a comparatively low absolute number of casualties. There are a number of ways in which this might be done, which will be examined in the next section.

## IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED FOR A SECURITY GUARANTEE TO BE EFFECTIVE

If the West is serious about giving a security guarantee to the Visegrad nations, either by 2000, or, if events in Russia go badly, before, there is clearly much that needs to be done to make it effective. Much of this will be possible under NATO's Partnership for Peace program, and requires only planning. Other measures would require significant changes to Western defence organizations, force structure, equipment and doctrine. The integration of the Visegrad nations into NATO's Air Defence System, the development of more mobile NATO air forces, the restructuring of NATO's ground forces, logistics, and C2, as well as improvements to the infrastructure of the Visegrad nations themselves, will all be critical areas for improvement.

### IMPROVEMENTS TO VISEGRAD INFRASTRUCTURE

If reinforcement is to be smooth and rapid, improvements to the infrastructure of the Visegrad nations, and the former GDR, will be needed. Much of this will occur in the normal course of economic development. Autobahn links are being extended into the East, sometimes with European Bank for Reconstruction and Development funds as in the case of Austria and Hungary, and rail links improved (it is worth noting that the Channel Tunnel will allow rail movement from London to Hamburg in seven hours). Ports and airfields should be increased in capacity, and oil pipelines connected to the West, rather than Russia. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are all in the process of linking their oil distribution systems to the West. Slovakia's inability to do so, and continued dependence on Russian oil, may be a factor in her relations with Russia. Most important, secure communications links need to be established to the West, capable of handling both military and civilian traffic.



## INTEGRATION WITH NATO AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

Given the critical role of air power in allowing Western deployment priority would need to be given to plans to re-orientate the Air Defence systems of the Visegrad nations eastward, and to integrate them securely into the NATO Air Defence system. Where this is technically difficult - Western and Eastern C4I architectures may be an area of especial complexity - plans for their replacement must be a priority. If security is seen as a problem these architectures could presumably be constructed in such a way as to allow NATO to see the picture forward, but without necessarily revealing to the Visegrad nations either the picture or the technical details of the system to their West - at least until confidence in security procedures and vetting is fully established. Movement corridors for the forward deployment of ground forces could be pre-planned to ensure that Surface to Air Missile (SAM) coverage would be possible - whether from local or forward deployed forces.

## DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE NATO AIR FORCES

Having secured the air environment, NATO air forces would need to be weaned away from dependence on fixed Main Operating Bases such as Ramstein and Wildenrath and to return to their historical roots as expeditionary air forces. Plans would need to be made to allow the deployment of NATO aircraft forward to operate from comparatively primitive airfields, and to command, maintain, resupply and defend them once there. The gradual re-equipment of the Visegrad air forces with Western aircraft would be a tremendous advantage, but interoperability at lower levels might still be possible by adapting weapon mounts and electronics. The current series of deals by which Russia is writing off large portions of her foreign debt by offering weapons (normally Mig -29) and oil should, if possible, be discouraged.<sup>28</sup> Where Western aircraft are surplus they might be 'cascaded' in the same way as has already occurred to the benefit of Turkey and Greece. If higher performance aircraft are required they might be leased under favorable rates.

Within the same broad area two further points deserve mention. The threat posed by Russian Surface to Surface Missiles (SSMs) equipped with nuclear munitions emphasizes the need for a reliable and effective mobile Anti-Ballistic Missile system, securely linked to strategic surveillance assets. Second, the organization of deep strike missions will need to be practised to ensure that formations of many nationalities can be tracked and distinguished within a confused and fast-moving battle.

### RESTRUCTURING OF NATO GROUND FORCES

The next category of improvements would lie in the capability of the reinforcing forces themselves. NATO's current first line divisions, whether organized in the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), the Franco-German Corps, or a Multinational Main Defence Force Corps, are inadequate in readiness, logistic capability, operational mobility, and ability to cover an extended front. Readiness is a function of money and manpower. The remaining problems are open to technical solutions. One option would be to increase the proportion of 'cavalry' units, and to base the division on, at most, a 30/40 ton chassis rather than a 50/60 ton one. Mobility would increase and logistic load significantly diminish; so, unfortunately, would firepower and resilience. An alternative would be to develop air mechanization along the lines proposed by General von Senger und Etterlin when CINCENT, and actually practised by the French in 4 Division Aeromobile.

Von Senger proposed the formation of several airmechanized divisions based on an attack helicopter brigade of about fifty AH, with logistics provided by a transport helicopter force and a small security element.<sup>29</sup> He intended to use them as operational level reserves, deployed in great depth, and believed that they should be capable of a move of 300 kilometers in a single leap, followed by sustained combat. The Germans intended at one stage to form three such divisions, using the existing formations already grouped at corps level, but abandoned the idea in the turmoil of reorganization. The French concept for 4 Division is similar. The division is required to be able to locate and

track an enemy armored force at a distance of up to 100 kilometers using its own or corps resources, and subsequently to destroy it using its own AH. The difference to von Senger's proposal lies in the requirement for the division to locate and track the enemy using its own resources, rather than merely attack a force already fixed by a ground element. It therefore has a substantial force of reconnaissance helicopters in addition to its AH and transport lift, and also has the ability to deploy ground reconnaissance (motorcyclists), engineers, and anti-tank infantry. All told it deploys some 234 helicopters at a manpower cost of 6000 men.<sup>30</sup>

Such formations would meet many of the criteria for a Western ground force outlined above. They would have tremendous anti-tank firepower. They are highly mobile, at both operational and tactical levels, and can both cover wide frontages and concentrate rapidly to defeat a specific threat. While extremely expensive, they are very manpower efficient, maximizing the use of limited but skilled professional troops. They are therefore capable of being kept at a high state of readiness and do not require the potentially escalatory, and politically difficult, move of mobilization. For both reasons they can be seen as contributing to stability, rather than detracting from it. Moreover, they might allow all the countries of the EU/NATO to make a timely contribution to deterrence, in this instance in Eastern Europe, but perhaps on other occasions in the Southern Region or in force projection operations. They might even, in due course, form the nucleus of a European army.

If NATO's current eight first line divisions were transformed to airmechanized formations, something not impossible using previously planned buys or existing assets, the ground balance might be fundamentally transformed. Forward deployment could be very rapid, preempting Russian protests and action. All the NATO nations could be represented, including those, such as Spain and Italy, at present unable to contribute in a timely or effective manner through sheer distance from the theatre of operations. The entire length of the Polish border could be covered - an airmechanized division should

have the capability comfortably to cover a front of 100 kilometres in open terrain without fear of being cut off if attacked - and Polish mobilization delayed (if required for crisis management reasons) or accomplished in security. If Russia did attack, an aggressive covering force action could be fought back to the Vistula, while NATO's main defensive forces, the current 2nd line divisions, could mobilize and move forward. Once a secure defensive line had been established, the airmechanized forces could reconstitute and be used either as operational reserves against a renewed Russian attack or to counter attack. The extraordinary range and mobility of such a force would offer a NATO commander a number of interesting options to open new lines of operation - whether from Hungary into the Ukraine (in conjunction with a political announcement in favor of renewed Ukrainian independence), or into the Baltic states and from thence to threaten either Minsk or St. Petersburg.

It is important to note that airmechanised forces would not replace conventional heavy forces, which would still be required to seize and hold vital ground or to counter attack to regain territory ceded to the Russians in the opening stages of a conflict. However, the heavy forces could be maintained at lower levels of readiness and training (equating in practice to existing levels), and would at least not be required to conduct meeting engagements as they attempted to move forward into Poland. In many ways the principles for the use of the airmechanised force should resemble those for using armor in conjunction with a larger infantry force - the airmechanised force should be held dispersed but concentrated and used en masse for decisive action, something made infinitely easier by the superior mobility of the machine concerned and its independence of ground obstacles.

A final improvement to NATO's capability to reinforce would lie in the type and deployment of the US contribution. Given the US's expertise in AH operations, and its large holdings of AH-64, there would be clear advantages were the two forward based divisions to be restructured as airmechanized divisions. From a US perspective this would

have the attraction of creating two forward deployed divisions with the inherent mobility to deploy throughout Europe and, with suitable logistic reinforcement, to the Middle East or North Africa. Whereas the sea deployment of a heavy force to the Middle East from Bremen would be only slightly quicker than from Savannah, the same does not apply at present to an airmechanised division, for whom the Atlantic still poses a significant obstacle. Moreover, the manpower slice required for an airmechanized force would be smaller, either decreasing overall numbers forward-based or increasing the slice available for logistics troops.

### LOGISTICS

Logistics planning and preparation would pay particular dividends. In the same way as with the air forces, standardization should be gradually developed with the Visegrad ground forces, starting with doctrine and training, and moving on to equipment in due course as Soviet-era equipment becomes obsolete. As none of the Visegrad nations has money to spare for extensive re-equipment programs 'cascading' should be used whenever possible. There may also be scope for restructuring ground forces away from their present offensive configuration towards a more defensive force structure with fewer tanks and more anti-tank weapons depending on terrain, which would make the process of re-equipment less expensive. Other changes could include the production of shadow Host Nation Support agreements to allow Visegrad resources to be included in planning for logistic resupply, transport and the defence of Lines of Communication. Lastly, the force structure of NATO's Main Defence Forces would need to be adapted to increase the number of logistic troops in order to provide sufficient support 400 kilometers further forward than previously required.

### COMMAND AND CONTROL

HQ AFCENT is currently responsible for Europe North of the Alps. To expand NATO to include the Visegrad nations would enormously increase HQ AFCENT's area of responsibility and span of command. HQ AFCENT should probably continue to command

across Europe north of the Alps to ensure concentration of effort and, in particular, the effective coordination of NATO air forces. However, the span of command of ground forces, and the distance at which they would be deployed, suggest both that HQ AFCENT itself would need to be located further East, and that at least two subordinate commands would be required. Any change to the permanent command infrastructure at present is probably premature. It could be considered provocative, and would promote needless debate within NATO itself. Nevertheless, plans could be laid for HQ AFCENT to be located in Southern Germany or even, in due course, in Prague.

The subordinate commands might, until NATO expands and perhaps even then, be nested within AFCENT as Combined and Joint Task Forces (CJTFs). In selecting the commanders account would need to be taken of the size of national contributions, the control of nuclear weapons, and national sensitivities. The latter might suggest that a German commander should be avoided in Poland, but would be much more acceptable in Central Europe. One of the two CJTFs might therefore focus on Eastern Europe and Poland, and should be commanded by a US general to reassure the Poles. The other should be orientated on Central Europe, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, and might be commanded by a German. The CJTFs must, by definition, be capable of being deployed forward and of commanding both Joint and Combined forces. They must include Visegrad officers as early as possible - the Visegrad armies should therefore be selecting suitable captains now for inter-army exchanges and language training, with a view to them having broad experience, as well as a detailed knowledge of their own forces, when the time comes for them to fill appointments in NATO headquarters. On the maritime flank, NATO's current structure allocates the sea area of the Baltic to AFNORTHWEST, and its airspace to AFCENT. Although both sea and airspace are in fact controlled by a single joint and combined headquarters in Denmark, this excessively complex relationship should be resolved in favor of AFCENT. In the long run there may

be scope for other solutions involving other Nordic nations and, perhaps, even the Baltic states, but this is not yet an issue.

### CONCLUSIONS

The EU is likely to expand to include the majority, if not all, of the Visegrad nations by 2000. On current performance Poland and the Czech Republic will meet any of the conditions set, Hungary will probably do so, and only Slovakia seems to be a more doubtful case. When this occurs the countries concerned will effectively become part of the West, and, implicitly or explicitly, will receive a security guarantee. NATO apart, present WEU policy, agreed by the EU at Maastricht, is to invite all members of the EU to accede to the WEU, which includes a clearly articulated provision for collective defense. Even were this policy to be set aside the scale of Western, and particularly German, trade and investment in the Visegrad nations would give the West an overwhelming interest in their security.

The principal areas of concern in giving a security guarantee to the Visegrad nations are ethnic and minority disputes, linked to border revision, and relations with Russia. All four Visegrad countries contain ethnic minorities, and themselves have populations of varying size in neighboring states. However, the scale of the associated problems differs widely. In Poland and the Czech Republic both internal and external minorities are small, economic progress is being made, and such problems as exist are kept in proportion. Hungary, while relatively homogenous itself, has significant external minorities within Slovakia, Serbia and Romania. The latter are less developed, are experiencing great economic and political difficulty, and have used nationalism to seek favor with their electorates. Hungary has not, so far, replied in kind. The EU, through the CSCE, is focusing on the issue of minority rights, and is in a position to exert considerable political and economic leverage to ensure that governments respect the position of their minorities. It can also be argued that such problems can best be mitigated by political and economic development within, rather than outside, an alliance.

Relations with Russia pose problems of a different scale. The nature of Russia's government is becoming increasingly authoritarian, driven by the need to assert itself against a variety of centrifugal forces which threaten the survival of the state. Since these forces are inherent in the size and disparate nature of the Russian Federation, and have been in evidence through Russia's history, they are unlikely to disappear, even under a comparatively democratic form of government. Russia's foreign policy, in turn, will reflect this authoritarian and nationalist ethos, whether under Mr. Yeltsin or a more extreme figure. Moreover, its fundamental relationship to the nature of the state make it difficult for external influences to affect. Western policies aimed at avoiding exciting authoritarian nationalism in Russia may therefore be misguided - it is inherent in the nature of the state, whatever the superficial character of the government.

If the ability of the Russian state to survive requires a strong central government and the projection of a strong nationalist ethos two consequences follow. First, its relations with its neighbors, especially those with substantial Russian populations, will tend to the extreme. Either they will assert their independence strongly, or they will be subservient and risk re-absorption into Russia. Second, Russia will require substantial armed forces to back its policies, and will have few qualms over their use. The development of a Russian Monroe Doctrine within the borders of the FSU, backed by Russian 'peacekeeping' forces, reflects this tendency.

While Belarus and the Ukraine retain their independence the development of an aggressive Russian policy towards its neighbors is not of direct concern to the Visegrad countries or the West. However, the future of both Belarus and the Ukraine appears to be in doubt. Belarus is increasingly being drawn back into Russia, apparently willingly, while the Ukraine's economy is deteriorating to the point where its total collapse is not impossible. If this were to occur the most likely development would be its re-integration into Russia, peacefully or otherwise. Russia would then once more border the West where its foreign policy and military strength will be potentially destabilizing unless



constrained. An essential element of constraint will be the West's security guarantee to the Visegrad nations. However, to be effective this must be based on a stable military balance of power.

While the Ukraine remains independent, Russia's ability to use military force to coerce any of the Visegrad nations is very limited. Russia has no direct contact with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Hungary and borders Poland only through the Kaliningrad enclave. Provided Russia adheres to the CFE Treaty her ability to project force via Belarus would also be limited. The Ukraine not only provides protection to Central Europe, but has a doubly beneficial effect on Russian force levels by both reducing their potential size under CFE by 25% and by requiring Russia to take account of the Ukraine's potential hostility to any aggressive action further West. If, however, the Ukraine is re-absorbed into Russia the military balance is fundamentally altered.

Russia would then be able to deploy substantial forces on the borders of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Both Slovakia and Hungary have short and comparatively easily defended borders with Russia. Poland, however, has both a very long border of some 900 kilometers, and is restricted in the forces she can equip by the CFE Treaty. The combination of extended frontages and absolute inferiority mean that Poland would not be able to defend herself against Russia without Western aid. The ability of the West to offer such aid, under current plans, is open to question.

Western options would theoretically include a nuclear guarantee, the application of strategic or tactical air power (including air and sea-launched cruise missiles), and the provision of ground troops. However, the credibility of extended deterrence has long depended on the vital nature of the interest being threatened. It is not clear that Poland, Slovakia or Hungary would immediately qualify, particularly if the West were to be presented with a *fait accompli* accompanied by Russian threats of nuclear first use against Western intervention. The same argument could be applied in the case of strategic air

power. Russian military sources have made it plain that a Western strike of the sort used to render Iraq helpless would run the risk of nuclear retaliation.

The application of tactical air power, while clearly well suited to operating on extended frontages in open terrain, would depend on the early achievement of air superiority. A number of factors might make this more difficult to achieve in the early stages of a conflict than it was in the Gulf. Western air forces would be operating at extended ranges in a poorly integrated air defence environment, possibly with an adverse force ratio. Conversely, Russian forces would have the initiative, might well have surprise, and would be both better equipped and more aggressive than Iraqi. Without air superiority it would not be easy to apply Western tactical air power in the devastating way in which it was used in the Gulf.

An effective security guarantee would therefore ultimately rest on the deployment of Western ground forces. This, too, would present considerable difficulties. Western residual force levels are too low to be remotely effective without full mobilization. This could be regarded as escalatory and would be difficult to achieve against Russian diplomatic pressure. Assuming that Russia's first line forces were maintained at a high readiness state and moved first, any Western deployment forward would be open to air and ground interference. Once deployed, Western forces would still be insufficient to cover the extended frontage of Eastern Poland and would be at or beyond the limit of their logistic support. If they failed to deploy in time they would have the option of counter attack. However, it must be doubted whether the West would have the will to attack a nuclear power of the capability of Russia in such circumstances. The most probable outcome would then be that Western forces would not be deployed beyond Germany's eastern border and that Western military action would be stillborn.

There is much that could be done to change this somewhat gloomy prognosis. A priority would be for the West to clarify the nature of the guarantee that it is prepared to give. There might be a residual case for leaving the nature of a future guarantee uncertain

lest it dislocate the reform process in Russia, although a better reason would be the need to avoid presenting Russia with a window of opportunity before a guarantee became effective. However, once the Visegrad nations do join the EU the guarantee should be explicit and unconditional. For it to be less would invite Russia to explore its limits. A NATO guarantee would carry much greater weight, and would therefore contribute far more to stability, than one from the WEU.

Having given such a guarantee the West should ensure that it was militarily credible. A priority should be the effective integration of the Visegrad nations into the NATO air defence system. Once this has been achieved plans could be made to deploy Western air forces forward in order to attain air superiority as soon as possible and to allow Western air tactical power to be effectively applied. The infrastructure of transport and communications links should be improved to ensure that this reinforcement is logistically sustainable. Much of this could be done within normal civilian economic development. Visegrad air forces should be modernized and, where possible, re-equipped with Western types through trickle down. A mobile ABM system will be required to counter any Russian threat of sub-strategic nuclear strikes.

The effective deployment of ground forces would pose the greatest problems. Forward basing in Poland would be politically unacceptable to the majority of European nations, and perhaps also to the Poles. Without forward basing NATO will always be faced with a choice between escalatory mobilization and acting too late. Moreover the force levels required for effective linear defense would be extremely high. Non-linear defence with conventional armored formations remains caught within this dilemma. 'Defensive defence' is not well suited to Poland's geography, although it may allow the use of Poland's trained reserves whom CFE will not allow to be equipped within mechanized formations, but might be suitable for use in the other Visegrad nations.

A better solution might involve the conversion of NATO's first line formations into airmechanized divisions, backed by 2nd line conventional heavy forces, which would have

the right combination of readiness, operational and tactical mobility, firepower and ability to cover wide frontages required. Moreover, their low manpower requirement and high dependence on technically skilled soldiers would play to the strengths of modern European societies for whom mass armies and conscription have diminishing attraction. It would also allow all the European nations to be involved in the defence of their borders without forward basing, and without the immediate risk of high casualties.

Such a solution would have a number of strategic and operational advantages. The force could be held at high readiness, would not require mobilization, and could be deployed pre-emptively in the face of a threat. It would be able to cover the wide frontages and open terrain of Poland's eastern border without fear of being penetrated and defeated in detail, allowing Polish and NATO mobilization to be accomplished in security. While limited in its ability to take or hold ground it has a considerable ability to raid which would pose a most uncertain and therefore highly deterrent threat to an aggressor.

Other improvements required arise in the area of logistics and standardization, all conducive to planning which could be carried out under the aegis of Partnership for Peace. Visegrad doctrine, training and equipment could gradually be standardized with NATO's. Host Nation Support agreements could be prepared to ease the deployment and resupply of NATO forces as they move forward. NATO forces themselves would have to adjust their force structure, by increasing their logistic troops, to ensure that they could operate effectively over extended lines of communications.

NATO's command structure would also have to be adapted. While AFCENT should remain responsible for Europe north of the Alps its span of command would become too large. A solution might involve forming two CJTFs within AFCENT, possibly under US and German command to take account of regional sensitivities, focused on Poland and Central Europe respectively. The Baltic should be completely included within AFCENT. AFCENT itself should, in due course, be prepared to move East, possibly to Prague.

Finally, while this paper has considered the security implications of the expansion of the EU in the timeframe of 2000, this linkage should not be inviolate. The West may control the timetable for admission to the EU, but its influence on events in Russia and the Ukraine is tenuous at best. Were the Ukraine to collapse before 2000 the West would come under renewed and greater pressure from the Visegrad nations for admission to NATO. It might be overfaced and refuse to admit them. If, however, it does admit them, it will not be sufficient to provide a paper guarantee.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Articles J.1 and J.4 of the Maastricht Treaty, quoted in "Maastricht made Simple", The European, London, 1992, 20-23.
- 2 Article 5 of the modified Brussels Treaty states that 'If any of the high contracting parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other high contracting parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations, afford the party so attacked all military and other aid and assistance in their power.'
- 3 Conversations at NATO HQ, Brussels, February 1994.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Samuel P Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations." Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, 27.
- 6 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report. Poland 4th quarter 1993. London, 1993, 4-7.
- 7 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report. Czech Republic and Slovakia 4th quarter 1993. London, 1993, 9.
- 8 Ibid, 7-8.
- 9 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report. Hungary 4th quarter 1993. London 1993, 4-13.
- 10 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Profile. Hungary 1992/3. London 1992, 8.
- 11 Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report. Czech Republic and Slovakia 4th quarter 1993. London 1993, 32-33.
- 12 Owen Harries. "The Collapse of the West." Foreign Affairs, September/October 1993, 42-43.
- 13 Lilia Shitsova, quoted in "Enter Yet Another Yeltsin." The Economist. 22 January 1994, 51.
- 14 "Enter Yet Another Yeltsin." The Economist. 22 January 1994, 51.
- 15 FMSO Briefing Document. "Russian Military Doctrine 1990/1992 Compared", taken from Mary FitzGerald, Russia's New Military Doctrine. Hudson Briefing Paper No 148, January 1993.
- 16 "Main Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation", Military News Bulletin No 11, November 1993, 3.
- 17 "Forget the Bel", The Economist, 15 January 1994, 51-52.
- 18 The Military Balance 1993-1994, cited in Richard J Nordin, Serving the Fatherland: Russian Military Development in the 1990s. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, January 1994 (ongoing RAND Study).
- 19 Nordin, 20-21.

- 20 Annex A to CJ Dick, Russia's Draft Military Doctrine, 10 Months On. Ft Leavenworth, KS: FMSO and RMA Sandhurst, SSRC, April 1993, 1-2.
- 21 "Russia - Military to be cut by 200,000", Interfax, 17 Mar 94.
- 22 Russia is currently reorganising certain of its tank and motor rifle divisions into a corps and brigade structure. However, it appears that divisions and regiments may remain in the orbat. Hence Division Equivalents. The figure of 30 divisions available for offensive operations is derived from a total armed forces strength of 2 million (including Belarus and the Ukraine). This should produce c.1.5 million for the Army. Taking aside .3 million for infrastructure provides 1.2 million for field formations. A divisional slice of 30,000 would then give 30 divisions at full strength plus 300,000 for a varying number of additional full strength or cadre divisions.
- 23 Summary of NATO London Declaration in July 1990, cited in Richard L. Kugler, The Future US Military Presence in Europe - Forces and Requirements for the Post-Cold War Era. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992, 2.
- 24 p2, Main Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Military News Bulletin No 11, November 1993.
- 25 Talk by Dr J Kipp, SAMS, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 15 November 1993.
- 26 Paul K. Davis, Robert D. Howe, Richard L. Kugler, William G. Wild. Variables Affecting Central Region Stability: the 'Operational Minimum' and Other Issues at Low Force Levels. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, September 1989, 9-36. Note that such figures are heavily dependent on a number of variables including terrain, and the firepower and personnel strength of the division concerned.
- 27 Poland's population is 37,840,000 in 312,683 km<sup>2</sup>. West Germany's, in 1983, was 61,420,000 in 284,665 km<sup>2</sup>. Data from Times Atlas of the World. 7th Comprehensive Ed., 1988.
- 28 "Eastern Europe Caught up in New Arms Race". Financial Times, 12 January 1994. Included in USNI/Military Database.
- 29 "The Air-mobile Divisions: Operational Reserves for NATO." RUSI Journal, March 1987, 23-30. Article based on conversations and proposed speech by General Dr von Senger und Etterlin.
- 30 William M. Jacobs, Massing the Third Dimension in AirLand Battle-Future: the Aviation Division. Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1990, 24-28.

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